

River Herring Technical Expert Working Group (TEWG)
Ecosystem Integration Committee Webinar/Conference Call
June 23, 2014
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Summary

I. Overview

The Ecosystem Integration Committee (EIC) of the River Herring Technical Expert Working Group was established to “ensure that the work of the subgroups is fully integrated to facilitate subgroup and TEWG discussions, as well as conservation planning development”. The EIC is comprised of chairs/co-chairs from the six river herring TEWG subgroups. Kim Damon-Randall and Jon Hare, co-chairs of the EIC, convened a call on June 23, 2014, to begin discussions with the committee. The draft agenda focused on identifying cross-cutting and overarching issues brought up in the subgroup meetings. This meeting summary includes the primary discussion topics and outcomes to contribute to future TEWG discussions. The information provided below reflects individual expert opinion and not consensus.

II. Key Topics

The below includes a list of individual expert opinion provided by EIC members or the public on various overarching topics:

- Chairs/co-chairs provided summaries of each of the subgroup’s work to-date, including any larger considerations for committee discussion.¹ Topics with broad implications related to the TEWG and its products included the following:
 - Some subgroups (e.g., Habitat and Stock Status) are heavily represented by the Northeast, so bringing subgroups’ discussions to the larger TEWG to ensure the input from the Southeast is integral. In addition, some subgroups are inviting others with specific expertise to present and help inform the discussions.
 - Subgroups are working to compile information in a cohesive manner while avoiding redundancies from previous work (e.g., Endangered Species Act listing decision, stock assessments, etc.).
 - Subgroup suggestions should include a cost estimate for suggested research projects and/or conservation actions.
 - Subgroups should continue to keep the TEWG expected products in mind as they meet (e.g., identify data gaps and threats to river herring throughout their range). For example, the Habitat Subgroup plans to develop a threats table that is organized by life stage and effects from plants and animals. The EIC can help to monitor the TEWG expected products (e.g., subgroups focus on

¹ See TEWG meeting and subgroup summaries for additional information on subgroup progress:
<https://www.nero.noaa.gov/protected/riverherring/tewg/index.html>
July 24, 2014

what are the threats, what information is currently available and what is needed to improve our understanding).

- As subgroup work progresses, white papers (i.e., written reports) which outline discussions specific to the TEWG's expected products and related to each subgroup's overview should be submitted to the EIC and consequently the TEWG.
- The EIC considered and discussed the cross-cutting issues brought up by the subgroups, as well as a draft table which summarized these issues.
- The EIC will be the platform where public comment is addressed. If members of the public or the TEWG submit comments on the TEWG process, the EIC will discuss any potential issues and the best ways to respond in coordination with NOAA Fisheries and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

III. Key Outcomes

The below includes a list of individual expert opinions provided by participants related to specific threats, data gaps, research projects, conservation actions, information to be considered and/or monitoring (i.e., the identified research projects and/or conservation actions). These outcomes are listed in no particular order, and are related to cross-cutting and/or overlapping subgroup issues. See the background document and table for the full list of cross-cutting and overlapping issues at

<https://www.nero.noaa.gov/protected/riverherring/tewg/ecosystem/index.html>

a. Data Gaps

- Determine which data categories are missing from the stock assessments and how feasible it would be to obtain that information (Stock Status Subgroup plans to consider this).
- Time varying mortality (M).

b. Research Projects

- Consider using genetic techniques (microsatellites) to help determine which habitat fish are using and where they are going.
- Create/designate a lab on the East Coast where all tissue samples are sent to ensure standardized sampling; similar to what is done on the West Coast at the Southwest Science Center (Tim King from USGS was noted as possible suggestion for exploring this idea further.)

c. Information To Be Considered (e.g., published papers)

- Consider whether information (e.g., sampling methods) from ongoing studies with shad (e.g., in southern rivers) can be applied to river herring.
- Further pursue ecological based management modeling within the Stock Status Subgroup (Stock Status Subgroup plans to consider this)
- Canadian information (e.g., references in McBride et al. 2014).

d. Monitoring

- Consistent and standardized monitoring of both alewife and blueback herring is important. Information on the northern and southern extent of the range is important.

IV. Next Steps

The EIC discussed the following next steps:

- Provide comments on the draft table of overlapping issues so it can be finalized for distribution to the TEWG and members of the public.
- Doodle poll will be circulated for the next EIC conference call in early August, after the subgroups have had a chance to meet again. Potential speakers include Carlos Garser (NMFS NWFSC) and Paul Benson or Meghan McBride (Dalhousie University) to discuss broad issues and overarching lessons (e.g., salmon).
- Diane Borggaard will look to see if she has information from Jamie Cournane on her coastwide analysis to share with the group. If she does not have the information, she will let Mike Bailey know so he can follow-up.
- Diane Borggaard and Marin Hawk will reach-out to TEWG member Les Kaufman for additional information on his thoughts regarding ecosystem considerations. EIC will continue to discuss ecosystem-based issues/suggestions at the next meeting.

V. Participants

a. Committee Members

The affiliation of each member can be found on the subgroup roster available at the TEWG EIC website: <https://www.nero.noaa.gov/protected/riverherring/tewg/ecosystem/index.html>

Alison Bowden
Jon Hare
Eric Schultz
Jason Didden

Dan Kircheis
Kim Damon-Randall
Mike Bailey
Kevin Sullivan

b. Staff

Diane Borggaard
Marin Hawk

VI. Meeting Materials

The following materials were provided to support the meeting. Additional information can be found at the TEWG EIC website:

<https://www.nero.noaa.gov/protected/riverherring/tewg/ecosystem/index.html>

- Draft Agenda
- Draft Background Document
- Draft Table of Overarching Issues

**River Herring Technical Expert Working Group (TEWG)
Ecosystem Integration Committee Conference Call and Webinar
June 23, 2014
10:00am-12:00 pm**

Call-In Number: 1-888-394-8197
Passcode: 815277

Webinar: <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/391589390>

Draft Agenda

1. Purpose of committee²
2. Identify cross-cutting issues brought up in the subgroups (go through by subgroup)
3. Identify overarching issues
4. Other issues (e.g., future speaker ideas)
5. Next steps

² The Ecosystem Integration Committee is an overarching committee comprised of co-chairs from the 6 river herring TEWG subgroups. Many of the issues that the subgroups will be addressing are interrelated, and therefore, the work of one subgroup may be very relevant to another. This committee will ensure that the work of the subgroups is fully integrated to facilitate subgroup and TEWG discussions, as well as conservation planning development. In order to successfully restore river herring, it is important to increase the resilience of both species, and as such, the full array of interactions within the ecosystems that they occupy must be considered. Thus, this committee will make sure that an ecosystem perspective is taken by providing a forum to integrate information across the subgroups to inform the overall conservation strategy for these species.